

VALLEY VIEWS

Potomac
Valley
Audubon
Society

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April 2016

President's Perch

by Jane Vanderhook, PVAS President

April! The daffodils and forsythia are blooming and trees are turning green. Perhaps the worst of winter is behind us and we can get outside and enjoy long sunny days.

The beginning of April marks the end of our Annual Appeal for this fiscal year, and it has been very successful indeed. Thanks to all of you who have given so generously, we have far exceeded our budgeted goal of \$39,000. As I write this in the middle of March, we have had donations totaling \$41,251 from 208 people. That is just \$214 shy of our all-time record last year and I fully expect we will exceed that total by the time this newsletter goes to press. We cannot say "Thank you" too much or too often, so once again – Thank You!

On March 20th, our First-Day-of-Spring fundraiser took place at the Train Station in Shepherdstown featuring a bourbon tasting, champagne cocktails and a chocolate tasting. Susan Brookreson once again put her considerable talents to work creating gorgeous flower arrangements, and Deb Patthoff created a beautiful display of the bourbon bar and the room layout. Tanner Haid manned the champagne and wine bar, while Ray Vanderhook and Neal Barkus offered drinks and expertise at the bourbon bar. The chocolate and food were extraordinary, and although we did not raise as much money as we had hoped, by all other measures it was a highly successful event. Many thanks to Kristin Alexander, Alice and Neal Barkus, Susan and Joe Brookreson, Susan Fluharty, Erin Gealy, Kara Gibson, Tanner Haid and Alexandra Beaulieu, Gretchen Meadows, Diana Mullis, Deb Patthoff, Melanie Snyder, and Ray and Jane Vanderhook.

Birdseed Storage Ends April 1

**Please be sure to pick up any stored seed by March 31!
(Seed not picked up is forfeited).**

**Call me if I can be of help: Diana Mullis at 304-754-3753,
or dianamullis@aol.com**

Thanks!!

Director's Report

by Kristin Alexander, PVAS Executive Director

Survey Results – THANK YOU!

Thank you so much to ALL who participated in our recent survey. A total of 185 people including members, donors and program participants contributed which is fantastic! In the last newsletter I promised to share with you some of the highlights of the survey that will contribute to PVAS's future planning.

One of the big take-aways from the survey was how critical the preserves are to the community. Over 60% of respondents rated the preserves as "essential" to our mission. Adult, youth and conservation programs were also rated as important across the board. Some programs within each category were rated more highly than others and we will certainly be taking those thoughts into consideration as we weigh the pros and cons of each program.

We also learned that you'd like to see us put more effort into local and state advocacy as an organization. That has not been an emphasis within PVAS in recent years, so that feedback is certainly important to hear!

The majority of you get your information about PVAS programs in Valley Views, our monthly newsletter. Our website is also important. Interestingly, Facebook is not nearly as important to our particular group.

We learned that you'd like to see us improve our communications and change our e-mail blasts. We've been talking about that for some time, and now you've provided a nudge to move it up in our list of priorities.

You shared great ideas for trips, speakers, workshop topics and other programs for the future. We have passed those thoughts to our program staff and volunteers as we plan for the summer and beyond.

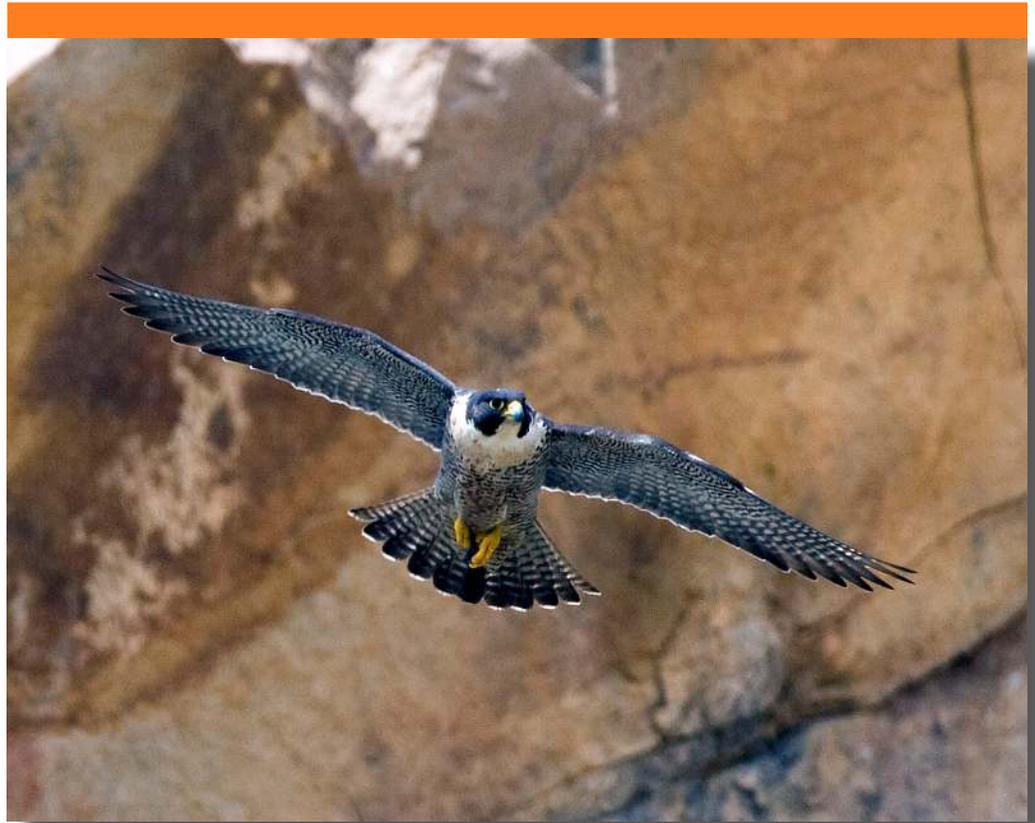
We will definitely be referring to the input from this survey as we prepare for PVAS's future. We truly appreciate you taking the time to provide your thoughts! Those of you who requested a "follow up" conversation will be hearing from either staff or a board member in the next month if you provided us with your contact information. We look forward to hearing more.

*Potomac Valley Audubon Society is people dedicated to preserving,
restoring, and enjoying the natural world through education and action.*

Peregrine Falcon

by Wil Hershberger

There is nothing quite like one's first experience seeing a Peregrine Falcon. A large, powerful, apex predatory raptor hurtling through the air like a bullet with effortless agility leaves one slack-jawed with amazement. However, there is some tiny remnant within the brain that quivers with fear at the site of these powerful birds. Peregrine Falcons are gorgeously tuned to their role in life. They are sleek – long pointed wings, which are designed for speed and agility, are connected to large, powerful breast muscles that can propel these birds to 25-35 mph in direct flight and up to 70 mph when chasing prey. Even their nostrils are constructed to allow the animal to breathe when flying at speeds in excess of 150 mph in a dive! Their strong, stout legs are used to punch their prey from the air, knocking them unconscious. Once the victim reaches the ground, the falcon circles back, grabs the prey with its razor-sharp talons, then, using its hooked beak, tears the prey into bite-sized pieces.



Peregrine Falcon in flight

Peregrine Falcons were once regular breeders over much of North America. Many populations in the east even nested in trees! Human disturbance has apparently eliminated the tree nesting behavior and now Peregrine Falcons are restricted to nesting on isolated cliffs or cliff-like structures. Even these populations of breeding Peregrines were assaulted by the widespread use of the pesticide DDT, from the 1940s through the 1970s, which accumulated in the food chain and led to eggshell thinning and the crushing of the eggs by the incubating female. In fact, there were so few Peregrine Falcons remaining in North America by the late 1960s that they had to be re-introduced from captive bred falcons that were “hacked” by numerous very dedicated volunteers. These hacking programs entailed finding a suitable location that could be a future-nesting site for the falcons. A large cage was secured in place and several young Peregrines were placed inside the cage. The volunteers would feed and attend the young birds until they were ready to fledge. All of these hacked birds were banded with Fish and Wildlife Service bands and colored bands for easy identification at a distance. It was hoped that these young Peregrines would return to the hacking site to start their own nests and thereby do their part to bring back the species from the brink of extinction.

The program worked! There are now numerous breeding sites for Peregrine Falcons over much of North America. Many nests are in remote, rocky cliff sites, while many others are in cities on the ledges of tall buildings and on bridge structures. Every nest is a treasure. Many city nests are now on webcam websites where tens of thousands of people can safely watch the daily peregrinations of these lovely Peregrine Falcons.

It is vitally important to not disturb nesting birds of any species. Falcons and other raptors are notorious for abandoning nests if disturbed. Therefore, the nesting sites of Peregrine Falcons, as well as other raptors, are protected from human disturbance. We are blessed that there are Peregrine Falcons nesting in our area on the cliffs of Maryland Heights (this was one of the many local hacking sites from the 1980s). This site is easily seen from Harper's Ferry National Historical Park. So, from March through August the trails and rock face will be closed to human traffic under the National Park Service closure order 36 CFR 13.50, which applies to all people, not just rock climbers. We are very appreciative that the park service has instituted this closure for the benefit of the falcons. If you are in the area and see violators of this closure you are asked to call the Park's Law Enforcement Emergency number, 304-535-6455. After normal park hours, please call the Jefferson County Emergency services at 304-725-8484.

It is the duty of us all to do what we can to protect these beleaguered fellow travelers on our fragile planet. Our species has done great harm to them in the past and now we are endeavoring to right that wrong. PVAS is planning to have volunteers stationed periodically at “The Point,” near John Brown's Fort, with spotting scopes to help visitors enjoy these magnificent Peregrine Falcons. Keep an eye on the PVAS website for further details and times.

Birding News and Events

Spring Cleaning of the Claymont Chimney Swift Tower

By Joette Borzik

After the Potomac Valley Audubon Society's first successful breeding season in the Chimney Swift tower built on the historic Claymont mansion property, it was time to clean it out and get it ready for the upcoming season. 2015 was our first full breeding season since the tower was constructed in late spring 2014. We were fortunate to have been successful in offering nesting habitat for these magnificent birds so quickly after the tower was erected.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology provides the following information about Chimney Swifts:

"A bird best identified by silhouette, the smudge-gray Chimney Swift nimbly maneuvers over rooftops, fields, and rivers to catch insects. Its tiny body, curving wings, and stiff, shallow wingbeats give it a flight style as distinctive as its fluid, chattering call. This enigmatic little bird spends almost its entire life airborne. When it lands, it can't perch - it clings to vertical walls inside chimneys or in hollow trees or caves."

Gary and Diane Sylvester and I did our first official clean out of the tower on March 13. The first step is removing the bottom of the tower, which is a piece of wood with a screen mesh in the center that offers the tower ventilation. We knew we had a wasp nest in the top, which needed to be removed. I was a bit concerned about getting stung by any wasps that might be still using the nest, but the wasp nest was vacant, so Gary stuck his hand in the top of the tower to knock it down while standing on a tall ladder. It takes a brave soul to climb a ladder to access the top of the tower.

After the wasp nest was removed, we disassembled the bottom of the tower by unscrewing a few screws, and it easily popped out.



Diane Sylvester shining a flashlight up the tower bottom to look inside.



Gary Sylvester showing what the bottom of the tower looks like.

A number of interesting items came out worth noting. The wasp nest was gorgeous and fully intact. Diane found a tiny Chimney Swift tail feather. It was fascinating admiring how tiny it was, and how functional it appeared to be: with the feather shaft directly in the center of the feather, it offered bracing support similar to a woodpecker's tail feathers.

In addition to lots of black Chimney Swift poop, there was a mysterious small bone that made its way into the tower. My guess is that a hawk was perched on the top of the tower while eating prey while a piece of bone from the prey fell down inside the tower hole. It was an odd and unexpected find. There were also spider sacs along the bottom edges of the screen. It's important to keep the tower cleaned out on a yearly basis to promote sanitary conditions for the swifts.

Chimney Swifts are suffering sharp declines as chimneys fall into disuse across the continent. The swift population has declined by over 50% in the last 40 years. Swifts winter in the Amazon Basin.

Birding News and Events

Don't Forget April 9 "Race for the Birds"

PVAS's 15th annual "This Race is for the Birds!" is almost here! It will be held on Saturday, April 9, at a new location: Wild Goose Farm at 293 Shepherd Grade Road in Shepherdstown. The farm is just across the road from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' National Conservation Training Center, where the event has been previously held. The Center is no longer able to host the event.

The 2016 event will include two professionally timed races: one 5 kilometers long and another 10 kilometers long. There will also be a one-mile "Fun Run" for children under 10 years of age. In addition, adults and families who wish to walk or jog the 5K course at their own pace may do so.

The 5 and 10K races will follow non-technical cross-country trails through the farm's scenic fields, rolling hills and woods. The course will be suitable for all runners. The 5 and 10K races will begin at 9:00 a.m. Please note that the time for the children's Fun Run has changed: it will be held at 10:45 a.m.

The children's Fun Run will be free. Fees for the other portion of the event will range from \$25 to \$35. You can save money by registering online.

To register, and for more information, go to the race website at www.raceforthebirds.org. Email Race4birds@potomacaudubon.org with any questions you may have. Race day registration is offered, but please note that registration for the 5 and 10K races will be capped at 300 for both, so a slot on race day is not guaranteed.

All proceeds will be used to support PVAS educational programs, and all fees are tax deductible.



April 23 Bird Walk at Antietam

PVAS will sponsor a bird walk along the Final Attack Trail at the Antietam National Battlefield in Sharpsburg, MD on Saturday, April 23. The walk is cosponsored by the Washington County Bird Club. It is free and open to anyone with an interest, regardless of birding skills. Children are welcome, but must be accompanied by an adult.

Pre-registration is strongly encouraged but not required. Easy registration is available on the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org.

Participants should plan to meet walk leader Sandy Sagalkin at the Burnside Bridge at 8:00 a.m. The walk will last about 2 ½ to 3 hours, and cover mostly level terrain. Participants should wear sturdy footwear, dress appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions, and bring along water. PVAS will provide binoculars for those who do not have their own. Various trip details could change depending on weather or recent bird sightings.

The trail the walk will follow is in the area where the Union Army made its final advance to drive the Confederate Army from Maryland on September 17, 1862, only to be turned back by A.P. Hill's final Confederate counterattack. It is also the site of an extensive effort by the Antietam National Battlefield to restore and preserve native grasslands on the Otto Farm fields in the Battlefield's southwest corner.

For more information, contact Sandy at monsansagalkin@myactv.net or 240-291-6465.

Bolivar Heights Bird Walk Set for April 27

PVAS will sponsor a bird walk in the Bolivar Heights section of the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park on Wednesday, April 27, led by veteran birder Deb Hale. The walk will begin at 7:00 a.m. and last two to three hours. The trip will focus on returning warblers and other spring migrants.

The event is free and open to anyone with an interest. Children are welcome. Binoculars will be available for anyone who needs them. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged but not required. Easy registration is available on the Society's website at www.potomacaudubon.org.

Participants will meet at the Bolivar Heights parking area. From the Route 340 traffic light at the entrance to the National Park, turn north onto Washington Street and follow it for about ¼ mile, then turn north again (left) onto Whitman Avenue; the parking area is at the top of the hill.

Participants should dress appropriately for prevailing weather conditions, and bring along water and insect repellent. This trip will be cancelled in the event of rain. For more information go to the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org, or contact Deb at debhale72@gmail.com or 304-535-1528.

Birding News and Events

Join April 2 Bird Walk at Claymont

PVAS will sponsor a bird walk on the historic Claymont property outside Charles Town, WV on Saturday, April 2. The walk will begin at 7:30 a.m. It is free and open to anyone with an interest, regardless of birding skills. Children are welcome, but must be accompanied by an adult. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged but not required. Easy registration is available on the Society's website at www.potomacaudubon.org.

Field trip participants should plan to meet the trip leader at the gate to the Claymont entrance road. The entrance is located at 667 Huyett Road, and is marked by a street sign that says "Claymont Mansion."

The trip will last about three hours and involve about three miles of moderate hiking, but participants may opt out at any time along the way. It should offer opportunities to see early grassland breeders, such as the Eastern Meadowlark, and winter residents that have not yet departed for their summer grounds.

Participants should dress appropriately for the prevailing weather and bring drinking water, trail snacks and insect repellent. Binoculars will be available for those who need them.

For more information, go to the PVAS website or contact Krista Hawley at adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org or 703-303-1026.

Join April 22 Earth Day Bird Walk in Hagerstown

Everyone is invited to join an Earth Day bird walk at the Kiwanis Park in Hagerstown the morning of Friday, April 22. The walk will begin at 8:00 a.m. and last about 1 ½ hours. It will cover easy terrain.

There is no fee but pre-registration is strongly encouraged. To register, go to the City of Hagerstown website at www.hagerstownmd.org/birdwalks. The walk is being co-sponsored by the City of Hagerstown, PVAS, and the Washington County Bird Club, and will be led by local birding expert Sandy Sagalkin.

This is a perfect bird walk for beginning birders, and it will include instruction on birding skills for those who need it. However, birders of all skill levels are welcome.

The trip will only be cancelled in the event of steady rain. Participants should wear appropriate footwear, dress for the prevailing weather conditions, and bring along water, sunscreen and insect repellent. The park is located at 371 Dynasty Drive in Hagerstown. For more information, contact Sandy at monsansagalkin@myactv.net, or 240-291-6465.

Birdathon Set for May 14-15

Did you know Birding could be a team sport? Form or join a team, and participate in this year's Ruth Ann Dean Memorial Birdathon! This fun, 24-hour event will be held the weekend of May 14 and 15. All are encouraged to participate, regardless of experience or expertise.

The Birdathon offers several options for joining this friendly competition to see who can identify the highest number of bird species during the weekend, inside PVAS's geographical territory (Jefferson, Berkeley, and Morgan counties in West Virginia, and Washington County in Maryland). This is a family-friendly event, and a great way to get children more interested in birds and the natural world in general.

There is no entry fee, though sponsorships are encouraged, similar to walk-a-thons! Participants can seek pledges from neighbors, family, and friends to help raise funds for PVAS's conservation programs such as its Grassland Birds Initiative. If you want to sponsor a favorite team, go to www.potomacaudubon.org/event-2119880 and donate whatever amount you choose. If you wish to donate a different amount or pay by check, you may send a check to Birdathon Donation, PVAS, PO Box 578, Shepherdstown WV 25443. Checks should be payable to PVAS. You should enter the team name on the memo line of the check.

People can participate in the Birdathon in one of two ways. The first way is to go out in the field, as part of a team or as an individual, and actively seek to identify as many birds as possible during any 24-consecutive-hour-period during the weekend. Birdathon teams should be two to five members in size and can be made up of friends or family members. If you don't have a team, but want to participate, PVAS will help you find some welcoming teammates. Team registration is now open on our website at www.potomacaudubon.org/event-2119882.

If you prefer a more low-key experience, you may participate in a "Big Sit," in which you choose any location you want within PVAS's territory and identify all the bird species you can see or hear from within a 50-foot diameter circle: again, within a 24-consecutive-hour-period during the weekend. You can locate your circle outside your porch or deck, in your yard, or in some favorite local spot. Here, too, you can do this on your own or invite friends and family to join you and make it a special event. This is a much easier option, and better suited for older folks and families with small children.

Those participating in the field and in individual or small-group Big Sits are asked to register with PVAS. Registration is free and easy on the PVAS website. PVAS's annual Birdathon is named in honor of Ruth Ann Dean, who was a founding member and ardent supporter of PVAS. Each year, it is part of a series of local activities commemorating International Migratory Bird Day.

Full details are available on the PVAS website. You may also contact Krista Hawley at adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org or 703-303-1026 with any questions you may have.



Barred Owl © Stephen L. Tabone

PVAS Events

April 13 Program Will Feature Talk on “Appalachian Night Sounds”

Our monthly program for April will feature a presentation about “Night Sounds of the Appalachians.” The program will be held at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, April 13 at the Hospice of the Panhandle facility in Kearneysville. Admission will be free and everyone is welcome.

The speaker will be Kevin Dodge, Professor of Wildlife and Biology at Garrett College in western Maryland. He will demonstrate and discuss the nocturnal sounds typically heard in the Appalachian region. Professor Dodge has taught at Garrett since 1987, and he directs the College’s Natural Resources and Wildlife Technology program.

In addition to his teaching and research work at the College, Dodge is actively involved in natural resources issues in Garrett County and the surrounding area. He is chair of the Savage River State Forest Citizens’ Advisory Board, president of the Allegheny Highlands Conservancy, and a member of the board of the Youghiogheny River Watershed Association. He is also a frequent local consultant to The Nature Conservancy, and he also leads numerous hikes and conducts campfire programs for that organization, and for state parks and forests. He received his B.S. in Biology from Southwest Missouri State University and his M.S. in Biology from Michigan Technological University. He pursued further studies in Wildlife Biology at West Virginia University.

The Hospice facility’s address is 330 Hospice Lane, Kearneysville. Audubon events are held in the main meeting room of the facility’s Main Office building. There is plenty of parking at the facility.

For more information go to the PVAS website or contact Krista Hawley at adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org, or 703-303-1026.

April 29 Shenandoah University Tour Will Focus on Medicinal Plants

Learn more about the fascinating world of medicinal plants by joining a special PVAS tour of several facilities at Shenandoah University’s School of Pharmacy in Winchester, VA on Friday, April 29. The tour will be held from 9:00-11:00 a.m. It will be free and open to anyone with an interest. However, space is limited and pre-registration is required. Easy registration is available on the PVAS website.

The guide for the tour will be Dr. Wendell Combest, professor of Pharmacology at the School and an expert in medicinal plants. Dr. Combest

received his Ph.D. in Pharmacology from the University of Arizona School of Medicine. His research interests are in Complementary/Alternative Medicine with specialties in the safety and efficacy of medicinal plants and the therapeutic benefits of gardens. He is also a certified Master Gardener.

The tour will begin in the SU School of Pharmacy’s Medicinal Plant Garden, which was established in 1997 and showcases over 200 species of medicinal and culinary plants. Plants from the garden are used in several ongoing faculty and student research projects and for compounding of herbal preparations. From there, the tour will move to the School’s Apothecary Museum, which recreates a Virginia pharmacy from the late 1800s and early 1900s. The tour will conclude in the School’s Medicinal Plants Laboratory where participants will have a hands-on experience of compounding some herbal remedies.

Shenandoah University’s Pharmacy School is located behind the Winchester Medical Center at 1775 North Sector Court, Winchester, VA.

For more information, go to the PVAS website or contact Debbie Maiorano at debbiem58@aol.com, or 540-535-5145.



Dr. Wendell Combest at SU Medicinal Plant Garden. © SU

PVAS Events

April 30 Workshop Will Focus on FrogWatch USA Protocols

PVAS will sponsor a Natural History Workshop on FrogWatch USA Protocols the morning of Saturday, April 30. It will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Hospice of the Panhandle in Kearneysville. The workshop will be led by Matt Neff, Animal Keeper at the National Zoo's Reptile Discovery Center. The session is open to anyone with an interest but space will be limited and pre-registration is required. The workshop is aimed at training volunteers to use the proper protocols for identifying the calls of local frog and toad species and submitting their findings to FrogWatch USA.

FrogWatch USA is a citizen science program of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. It provides individuals, groups, and families with an opportunity to learn about wetlands in their communities and report data on the calls of local frogs and toads. Volunteers collect data during evenings from February through August and have been submitting data for over 15 years. FrogWatch USA volunteers learn to identify local frog and toad species by their calls during the breeding season and how to report their findings accurately. By mastering these skills, volunteers gain increased experience and control over asking and answering scientific questions which, in turn, augments science literacy, facilitates conservation action and stewardship, and increases knowledge of amphibians.

The Hospice facility's address is 330 Hospice Lane, Kearneysville. The entrance is located on old Route 9, near Short Road, across from the Food Lion store. There is plenty of parking on site.

This event is one of a series of Natural History Workshops on different natural history topics the Society is sponsoring this year. These Workshops are intended for people who are interested in learning about particular natural history topics in considerable depth but cannot commit to pursue the much more comprehensive natural history education available through PVAS's Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program, which can take a year or more to complete.

To register for the workshop, please go to the PVAS website. For more information contact contact Debbie Maiorano at 540-535-5145 or debbiem58@aol.com.

Volunteers Needed to Support the National Park Service BioBlitz May 20-21, 2016

by Joette Borzik

What is a BioBlitz? A BioBlitz is a quest to discover living organisms. During these rapid biological surveys, scientists and volunteers of all ages and backgrounds work together to compile a "snapshot" of biodiversity in (usually) less than 48 hours. Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on our planet, including all living creatures, their habitats, natural processes, and the connections between these things

The National Park Service and the National Geographic Society have collaborated to host one large-scale BioBlitz per year for the 10 years leading up to the NPS Centennial in 2016. These high-profile events have involved thousands of participants of all ages and backgrounds who have worked together to discover wonderful diversity of species, as well as participate in a wide array of educational offerings. The 2016 BioBlitz will feature inventories at national park sites in and around Washington, D.C. on May 20-21, 2016, and will be the centerpiece of a national celebration of biodiversity, as simultaneous BioBlitzes take place in national parks across the country.

Our local parks need our support to make the BioBlitz 2016 a success. Potomac Valley Audubon Society is hoping to support the Harper's Ferry National Historical Park and the Antietam National Battlefield. There will be informational booths for both PVAS and PVMN that need staffing, and there will also be opportunities to do citizen science: bird and butterfly inventories will be conducted in two-hour segments, over the course of both days. If you would like to help us staff our booths or join an inventory at Bolivar Heights of the Harper's Ferry National Historical Park, please contact Joette Borzik at pep4223@comcast.net or (240) 440-4221.

If you are interested in helping to support the BioBlitz events at Antietam National Battlefield, please contact Sandy Sagalkin at sandy.sagalkin@gmail.com or (240) 291-6465.

Monocacy Battlefield and the C&O Canal National Historical Parks are also holding BioBlitzes at their parks. If you are interested in volunteering for Monocacy, please contact Danny Carter at Daniel_Carter@nps.gov. If interested in volunteering to help with the C&O Canal BioBlitz in Williamsport, contact Andrew_Landsman@nps.gov.

PVAS Events

Plans are in motion for International Migratory Bird Day

PVAS is putting together a week's worth of activities in May to help celebrate the 24th annual International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD). The IMBD is an international program that aims to promote greater understanding and appreciation of the importance of migratory birds in North, Central, and South America. It was initiated in 1993 by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center. This year's IMBD theme is "Restore Habitat; Restore Birds."

IMBD will kick off on Friday, May 6, with a bird walk in Harpers Ferry with Deb Hale. Events will continue through Sunday, May 15, and will include: daily bird walks around the Eastern Panhandle and Washington County, MD, a Big Sit in the Steamboat Run Meadow, an evening program on Purple Martins, as well as two days of PVAS's 7th annual Ruth Ann Dean Memorial Birdathon.

All local events are free, and everyone with an interest is invited to participate. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged for most events, and required for the Birdathon. No pre-registration is needed for the Wednesday, May 11 evening program on Purple Martins.

To register for events and for details, go to the PVAS website, <http://www.potomacaudubon.org>, contact the trip leader for the individual event, or contact Krista Hawley at adultprograms@potomacaudubon.org.

Native Plant Sale May 21

Details are coming together for the Native Plant Sale on May 21. Several vendors of native plants and garden art have signed up to participate, including Hill House Farm and Nursery, Star Eagle Gardens, Enchanters Garden, and Shary's Garden Art. We are expecting more applications to roll in. All will be listed on our website as they are approved.

In the meantime, you can pre-order butterfly weed from PVAS now at <http://potomacaudubon.org/Native-Plant-Sale>. Orders can be picked up at the May 21 sale. Any plants not pre-ordered will also be available on the 21st. Other vendors are also taking pre-orders. The links to their websites are available on our Native Plant Sale page: <http://potomacaudubon.org/Native-Plant-Sale>.

The sale will be held Saturday May 21, 2016 from 9am-4pm in conjunction with the well-established annual [Back Alley Garden Tour and Tea](#) in Shepherdstown, WV. The Native Plant Sale will take place behind the Shepherdstown Public Library where the Sunday farmers market takes place. Volunteers will be critical at the event! If interested, contact Kristin Alexander at Kristin@PotomacAudubon.org or 304-676-3397.

The intent of this new event is to provide high-quality native plants to our members and the larger community, with a focus on plants that benefit pollinators in trouble like the honeybee and Monarch Butterfly. PVAS is selling butterfly weed through a partnership with The Monarch Alliance of Washington County.



WV State Forester Herb Peddicord led a winter tree-identification field trip along the C&O Canal across from Shepherdstown Saturday, March 19. Participants learned how to identify trees by such factors as their shapes, branching habits, twigs and buds, and bark. Trip leader and Master Naturalist Debbie Maiorano reported that it was a fantastic presentation and a great learning experience. Master Naturalists were able to earn education recertification from this event.

Camp Programs

Don't Wait! Sign Up For Camp Now

Registration for our 14th year of Audubon Discovery Camp has begun and some sessions are already full! (A waiting list is being kept for these sessions, and we encourage you to sign up. No money is required for the waiting list.)

Sessions at Yankauer include "Camp Survivor," "Nature's Architects," and "Science in the Woods." "The Simple Life" and "Pioneer Survivor" are being offered at the Peter Burr Farm. "Wildlife CSI" (at Yankauer) and "Pioneer Survivor" (at Peter Burr Farm) are designed for older elementary campers.

New programs this year include a 3-day "Project Webfoot" session at Stauffer's Marsh in Back Creek Valley. The setting will be primitive (portable toilets and tents for shelter), but the program is designed to be fabulous, and the setting is even more fabulous! Stauffer's Marsh is a magical place. The session is designed for ages 10-13 and offered in mid-June. "DIY Nature" allows families to pick and choose one day of camp or multiple days. This program is being offered the first full week of June at the Yankauer Preserve.

High school students in our local area can take advantage of one of the best youth programs anywhere: our Digital Nature Photo Camp. Whether you've never held a camera or you want to learn better composition and technical techniques, teens will have a great time. The session is limited to only 10 campers, and most of each day is spent outside taking pictures. The week is capped with a public exhibition for family and friends.

Camp sessions are \$150 per week for PVAS members, although a few are slightly higher or lower. Those who are not yet PVAS members pay a higher fee that includes a one-year organization membership, but you can avoid that by joining or renewing your membership now (www.PotomacAudubon.org/member)! Just remember that the non-member fee applies *only* to the first camper session you register.

Questions about camp should be directed to Ellen Murphy (Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org).

Still Time to Apply for Summer Camp Scholarships!

It's finally spring! What a great time to plan for summer nature camp!

Camp scholarship applications must be post-marked no later than April 6, 2016, so act now! Scholarship offerings include the camps listed below, with ages and dates given. Look for additional details about each camp on our web site: www.potomacaudubon.org.

Audubon Discovery Day Camp: our own local day camp at Yankauer Nature Preserve, Peter Burr Farm, and Stauffer's Marsh; pre-school to grade 12, plus junior staff opportunities for grade 7 and older; a variety of week-long sessions in *June and July 2016*.

Oglebay Institute Junior Nature Camp: at Dallas Pike (near Wheeling), WV; ages 10-15; *July 24-30, or July 31-August 6, 2016*.

Burgundy Center for Wildlife Studies: at Capon Bridge, WV; ages 11-15; *June 26-July 9; July 12-26; or August 3-16, 2016*.

West Virginia Junior Conservation Camp; at Cedar Lakes, Ripley, WV; ages 11-14; *June 15-19, 2015*.

Mountain Stewards Summer Camp, MIDDLE SCHOOL Program, Spruce Knob, WV; entering grades 6-8; *June 12-17, June 19-24, June 26-July 1 (All Girls Week), and July 10-15, 2016*.

Mountain Stewards Summer Camp, HIGH SCHOOL Program, Spruce Knob, WV; grades 9-12 (up to age 17); *June 12-17, June 19-24, June 26 - July 1 (All Girls Week), July 3-8, and July 10-15, 2016*.

West Virginia Senior Conservation Camp: at Camp Caesar, Webster County, WV; Campers must be age 14 by January 1 and not past age 18 on June 1; *June 13-18, 2016*.

Nature Photography Camp: at Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, WV; grades 9-12 (ages 14-18); *June 20-24, 2016*.

Please check our website for scholarship application forms and links to the camps' web sites, providing lots more exciting information, great pictures, and camp descriptions! You may also contact scholarship coordinator Kathryn Henry at 304-876-6681, or dhenny@myexcel.com.

All young people within the PVAS membership area are eligible to apply for camp scholarships, which are supported by our fall birdseed sale, and by additional individual and community sources. Many thanks to these loyal supporters of our summer camping programs!



Volunteer Day: Save Our Trees

Local Master Naturalist and Certified Arborist, Shawn Walker, led a Volunteer Day: Save Our Trees From Invasive Vines at Morgan's Grove Park on Sunday, March 13. Shawn led the volunteers, through example and general instruction, as they worked to control and sever the invasive vines that were weighing down or girdling the trees at the park.



Spring School Programs

By the end of March each year, PVAS gets a short hiatus from school programs because of spring breaks and the beginning of testing. That breather doesn't last long, though, because lower grades often look toward Yankauer as a great end-of-year trip. As an outdoor learning lab, Yankauer programs can't be beat!

Second graders at Valley View Elementary in Berkeley County are looking forward to their "day in the woods" in early May. Volunteers will be helping these youngsters explore nature, and we're anticipating quite a few excited faces when the students arrive! In just a month, all the students at Rosemont Elementary in Martinsburg will receive a PVAS visit that will feature either an insects theme, a "plants v. animals" focus, or an animal adaptations adventure.

After spring break at the end of March, many of the watershed classes will participate in a field experience to a local stream where students will practice the water quality testing techniques and macroinvertebrate studies that they have been learning in class. They'll be testing the water quality, looking for critters in the creek, and playing games that help reinforce concepts they've been learning in the classroom this year. Don't forget, we can always use volunteers to help with these field studies!

It's not too late to schedule a PVAS school program. If your class is interested or if you know a teacher who might be looking for a great class trip, contact Ellen Murphy (Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org) and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Family and Youth Programs

Volunteers Needed For School Programs

PVAS depends on volunteers to carry out all our school programs, especially field trips to Yankauer and Stauffer's Marsh Preserves, and Tuscarora Creek. This spring, whether you are a seasoned veteran, new to PVAS programs, or a brand new Master Naturalist candidate, we invite you to help out. Spring watershed field trips involve helping the students look for macroinvertebrate critters in the water, testing water quality, fish printing, and leading water cycle related games and short nature walks. We offer training for everything!

These watershed field trips are generally 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. and students rotate through activities so you don't have to be a master of everything. Dates for these field trips are: April 5 and 7 at Flowing Springs Park near Ranson WV, April 18-20 at Poorhouse Farm Park in Martinsburg, April 22 at Stauffer's Marsh in Back Creek Valley, and May 28-29 at Mountain Ridge Intermediate School near Inwood WV.

In addition, we have some school groups visiting Yankauer Preserve and Stauffer's Marsh in May. These field trips will also be 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. but feature hiking and activities around a specific theme. May 3 at Stauffer's Marsh and May 4-5 at Yankauer Preserve will all feature a program for second grade students. On April 20, a Girl Scout troop will be visiting Stauffer's Marsh in the afternoon.

All of these programs depend on volunteers to make them happen and we welcome your help! To volunteer or just to have your questions answered, contact Ellen at Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org.

Family and Youth Programs

Sign Up For Wee Naturalists

Our monthly Wee Naturalists program that helps introduce preschoolers (ages 3-5) and a caring adult to outdoor adventures has begun! You can register online now! Wee Naturalist is designed so that child/parent teams explore outdoors together, focusing on a different theme each month. The programs are held at Yankauer Nature Preserve.

On April 18, we'll be learning that "Dirt Don't Hurt" as the group looks at the things that live in the soil, other things that are there that we can't see, and the colors and textures that we can. If we're lucky, we can go hiking and look for tracks in the mud! On May 16, we'll be discovering what lives in logs!

Programs begin at 9:30 a.m., but the first thirty minutes is for free play and exploration with the structured activities following. (Don't forget that the new Pixie Hollow area near the pavilion is perfect for free play!) Each session will include songs, sensory activities, movement, hikes, and a take-home craft. Cost is \$10 per child, and pre-registration is required. (There's no extra charge for twins or siblings under age 2.) Find out more and register at www.PotomacAudubon.org/weenats.



Everyone Welcome at April 16 Wildflower Festival

PVAS will hold its annual spring Wildflower Festival on Saturday, April 16 at its Yankauer Nature Preserve in Berkeley County. This family-friendly event, which is held to coincide with the peak of the spring wildflower season, will be held from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., rain or shine. A new StoryWalk® book has been selected for this year's festival, and children's games and activities will be held at the pavilion. Guided wildflower walks will be offered between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., and will leave the pavilion on the hour. Visitors are also welcome to explore the trails on their own, at their leisure. Admission is free and everyone is welcome. No pre-registration is required.

For the ninth year in a row, the festival will also include a Poetry Walk. We will feature works by local poets and children's art, all celebrating the beauty of spring! The poems will be posted all along the preserve's Kingfisher trail, where the majority of wildflowers are found. To submit your poetry, email it to Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org or mail it to Poetry Walk, PVAS, PO Box 578, Shepherdstown WV 25443, by April 15.



Cutleaf Toothwort, by Laura Rau

During early April, a wide variety of wildflowers should be on display, including bloodroot, spring beauties, Dutchman's breeches, and rue anemone.

The trails at Yankauer are primitive, so wear sturdy walking shoes. Please leave pets at home, and please leave the wildflowers where they are growing for all to enjoy. The Yankauer Preserve is located on Whiting's Neck in northeastern Berkeley County, off Scrabble Road. Directions can be found on the Potomac Valley Audubon website at www.potomacaudubon.org.

For more info, check the PVAS website or contact Ellen Murphy at 304-676-8739 or Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org.

Spring Beauty, by Charlotte Fremaux



“Pollinators, Monarchs, and Meadow Habitat”

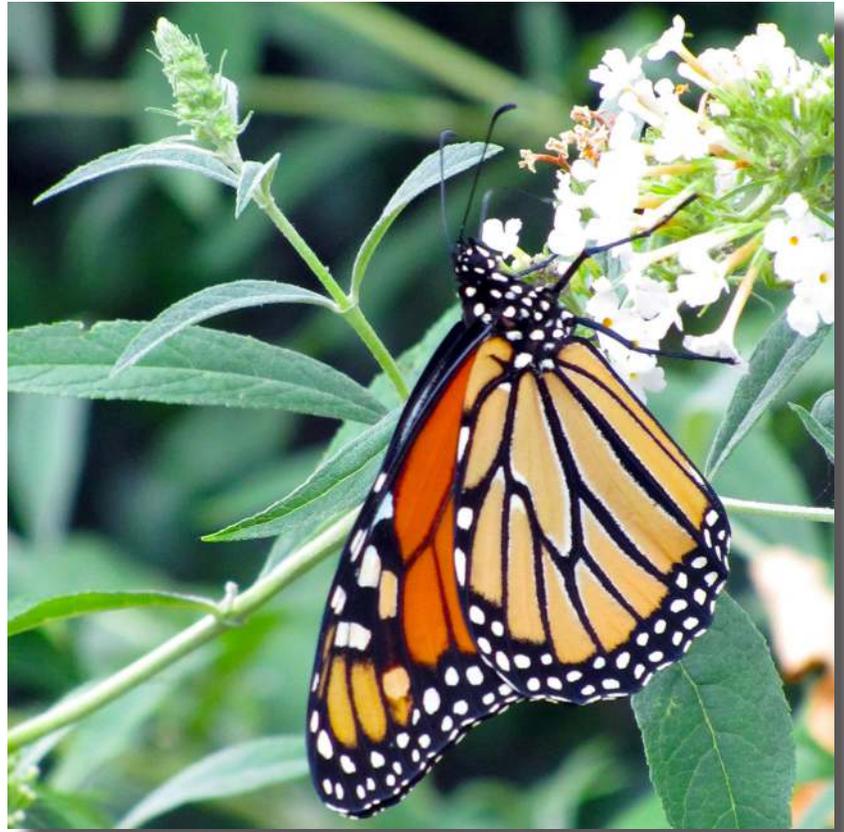
A Message from the Monarch Butterfly

On Wednesday, April 20, at 7:00 p.m., Dr. Marie Majarov will make a presentation at the Morgan County Board of Education Headquarters (located at 247 Harrison Avenue, Berkeley Springs) on the plight of the Monarch butterfly and our native pollinators, on what is being done to help, and how recent “numbers” look compared to past years.

Monarch butterflies are in trouble. Over the past few decades, the population of these magnificent creatures has declined by over 90%. The loss is even more significant in that Monarch butterflies are an “indicator” species: a plant or animal that highlights what is happening to other pollinator species. Without keystone species, such as the Monarch, the ecosystem would be dramatically different or possibly even cease to exist altogether.

Extinction is a very real possibility for many of our native pollinators. The blueberry-colored Xerces disappeared from San Francisco years ago, and recently the US Fish and Wildlife Service announced that two subspecies – the Rockland Skipper and Zertos in south Florida – haven’t been seen since 2004, and are probably extinct.

Bringing back monarchs and protecting our other native pollinator species will take concerned people acting together to create backyards and landscapes that are friendly to monarchs and other pollinator species throughout their lifecycles. Native plants are inviting places to lay eggs, sip nectar, or find shelter.



*Photos by Elmer Weibley,
Washington County
Soil Conservation District*



Dr. Majarov is a Virginia Master Naturalist, a freelance photographer, and a writer. Marie is a frequent contributor to *Virginia Wildlife Magazine*, where her articles include such topics as Monarch butterflies, honeybees, bluebirds, box turtles, macro-invertebrates, and native pollinators. Marie has also published articles on the Abram Creek wetlands, and Redbud Run. Her photography and writing have won numerous awards.

Marie and her husband, Milan Majarov, are both retired clinical psychologists. They live on the edge of a beautiful old woodland in Frederick County, VA, where they maintain a pollinator garden and bluebird trail.

This presentation is sponsored by the Warm Springs Watershed Association, and will precede the organization’s annual meeting. All are welcome to attend the presentation by Dr. Majarov, as well as the WSWA annual meeting. There is no charge. Refreshments will be served.

Notes from the Preserves

Pollinator Garden at Yankauer Entrance

My name is Alex Hinkle and I am a 15-year old boy scout for troop 33, located in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. When I was younger I spent lots of my time outdoors, and my favorite place to spend time over the summer was always Yankauer Nature Preserve. I went to camp there every summer for almost 6 years. When I was trying to decide where I would do my Eagle Scout Project I knew I wanted to not only give back to the community, but also give to a place that has given me some great memories and experiences. Therefore, when the time came around to pick a beneficiary for my Eagle Scout Project my first place to check was Yankauer.

For my project I created a low maintenance landscaping design for a pollinator garden at the entrance to Yankauer. Inside the garden I filled a 12x20 ft. area with topsoil and then a pollinator seed mix that will grow in the spring and summer. The pollinator seed mix has a variety of native flowers and bunch grasses. I then placed weed barrier and mulch around the area. I installed an interpretive sign, and I made and installed two bee blocks (man made beehives), to provide foraging and nesting for a variety of pollinators suitable to a habitat in the Mid-Atlantic region. I am very pleased to have been able to give a little back to a place that has given me so much!



Potomac Valley Master Naturalists

Master Naturalist 10 Year Anniversary Spring Gathering

The Second Annual Spring Gathering is scheduled for Saturday, May 7th, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Cacapon State Park in Morgan County. This is one of several events scheduled this year to celebrate PVMN's 10th Anniversary. We have reserved the Nature Center Pavilion where we were located last year. This pavilion is ideally located within the park with quick access to trails and nearby restrooms. Based on feedback from those at last year's event, it was a big success with over 30 Master Naturalists in attendance.

Activities planned for 2016 include an early morning bird walk, short hikes in the morning and afternoon focusing on general natural history, wildflowers, and a demonstration in campfire cooking. Other sessions will include presentations on wolves, foxes, and coyotes and on the Emerald Ash Borer. We have also invited a WVDNR representative to join us at lunchtime to discuss the State Wildlife Action Plan and how Master Naturalists can help DNR with their statewide surveys.

Certified Master Naturalists who attend will be able to purchase (for just \$5.00) their official PVMN 10th Anniversary pin. We also plan to have a birthday card at this event for all Master Naturalists to sign. The card will be available at all 10th Anniversary events leading up to the "Birthday Bash" celebration at NCTC on October 8, 2016.

As always, food is the main event in any gathering, so we will have another potluck lunch. Most activities will be held in both the morning and afternoon, allowing attendees flexibility as to when they can come. This event will be held rain or shine (I've heard it said that "it never rains on a Master Naturalist"), so come dressed for the weather.

Come out and bring a guest with you for a great time at beautiful Cacapon Resort State Park. Please contact Susan Jones at wvbagend@frontier.com if you are able to help with planning, set up or clean up.

Potomac Valley Master Naturalists

Volunteers “Pay the Rent”

By Amy Evrard

U.S. Representative Shirley Chisholm once said, “Service is the rent you pay for room on this earth.” The spirit of service through volunteerism is strong in the United States, reflected in events such as the upcoming National Volunteer Week (April 10-16). Charity and philanthropy are deeply written into U.S. history. Early in our history, the bulk of these activities were carried out within religious communities. These private and community-based efforts led to the founding of large, national organizations, such as Rotary International, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The 20th century and beyond have seen the widespread commitment to national volunteer projects and organizations, from the Civilian Conservation Corps, established in 1933 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, to the Peace Corps, founded by President John F. Kennedy in 1961. “Service learning” is an important component of higher education in American today, and organizations such as the Potomac Valley Audubon Society depend on volunteers to carry out service projects of all kinds. According to the Current Population Survey carried out by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, almost 25% of Americans volunteered in 2015.



A great concern for the earth and the room we humans take up on it is, of course, an important motivation for the Potomac Valley Master Naturalists, and service through volunteerism is an important component of the process of becoming and recertifying as a Master Naturalist. The PVMN Coordinating Committee carried out a Volunteer Interest Survey among those Master Naturalists attending the October 21, 2015, annual meeting and confirmed a high level of enthusiasm about volunteering. The full report on this survey, written by Mary Etta Boesl (who volunteered to write the report!) can be found here: go to <http://potomacaudubon.org/masternat>, and click on the link located just under the logo.

There are five kinds of volunteer projects that stand out in terms of the numbers of volunteers involved.

First and foremost, volunteers help to carry out the extensive environmental programs PVAS provides for local schools and libraries. Working closely with teachers and administrators, these programs expose children to environmental issues and science, provide hands-on education on the local environment (such as protecting the watershed), and are often the first chance city kids get to roam around a forest or dip their fingers in a local river. With such alarmist books as Richard Louv’s *Last Child in the Woods* telling us that American children are losing touch with nature, these volunteers play a crucial role in ensuring a love of nature and interest in the environment among future generations.

Second, volunteers lead the field trips for both adults and children that benefit many of us in PVAS as a whole. From bird walks to tree identification workshops to family wildflower walks, these volunteers share their expertise and help us learn about nature directly.

Third, land management/invasive removal and trail maintenance work attract volunteers, despite long hours of dirty work in the heat or the cold. This work is essential to maintaining such special places as Yankauer Nature Preserve and public parks such as Morgan’s Grove in Shepherdstown.

Fourth, volunteers provide outreach for PVAS at local fairs, parades, and festivals. From handing out brochures and answering questions at a city fair about attracting birds to one’s backyard, to donning their birding gear and marching in a local Christmas parade, volunteers are responsible for bringing new members and participants into PVAS.

Finally, volunteers act as citizen scientists, joining in such programs as the Christmas Bird Count and monitoring local streams. These programs are important in providing long-term data about local wildlife and the environment so that scientists can monitor changes in the local environment, seasonal bird migration, and weather patterns.

Clearly, PVMN volunteers like to be physically active in their volunteer work, not surprising for volunteers who love the outdoors and the natural world. Less popular but still important volunteer activities are more behind the scenes: coordinating events, calling volunteers, providing computer support, writing content for PVAS publications, and applying clerical skills. Fortunately, volunteers carry out these tasks as well, helping to keep PVAS and its projects running.

The Volunteer Interest Survey also indicates that several volunteers wish to do more in the future, reflecting the feeling of many of us that we cannot do enough to teach others about nature, attract new members to our organization, maintain beautiful natural places, and plant seeds in future generations. With National Volunteer Week just around the corner, this is a good time to look at the many volunteer opportunities available through PVAS and think about how you can “pay your rent” by serving the earth and your fellow human beings through volunteer service.

Potomac Valley Master Naturalist 10th Anniversary Pin

As promised, the Potomac Valley Master Naturalists can start the celebration in style with the new 10th Anniversary pin. The enameled pin features the new PVMN logo, and will add a festive accent to summer hiking gear.

The pins cost \$5.00 each, and will be available for purchase at Master Naturalist events such as the April 16th NCTC Reforestation Project, the May Spring Gathering, as well as other PVMN events throughout 2016. Questions regarding the events at which pins will be available for sale may be directed to Diana Pavlik at pavlikdm@gmail.com.

PVMN Special Volunteer Service Projects in 2016

Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Chapter is celebrating its 10th Anniversary in 2016, and we want to show our appreciation to the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) and Cacapon Resort State Park for serving as long standing supporters to PVMN over the past ten years. We will offer a special volunteer service project at each site during the year.

The National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) is the site of the service project on Saturday, April 16. This tree planting project will assist NCTC with its ongoing reforestation project on the campus. Work on the project will start at 9 a.m. and end around 12 noon.

Each Master Naturalist who participates in one of the projects will receive a special 10th Anniversary keepsake recognizing our long-standing partnership with the National Conservation Training Center and Cacapon Resort State Park. Dress for the weather, and bring water, work gloves, and a bag lunch to enjoy while getting to know the students enrolled in the 2016 PVMN Course.

So that we know how many to expect for the April 16 service project please register at the following link: <http://potomacaudubon.org/event-2162029>.

Registration is required, and closes on Tuesday, April 12 to allow time for the names of all volunteers to be submitted to NCTC security. This is protocol for gaining entry onto the campus.

Volunteers should meet at the Support Services parking lot (the security guard can direct you).

A second spring service project to be held at Cacapon Resort State Park is currently in the planning stages and will be announced soon.

JOIN PVAS TODAY!

ALL of your dues will stay here to support local PVAS efforts and help us grow! And here's what you'll get:

- Member discount to many PVAS programs and events.
- A subscription to *Valley Views*, the PVAS newsletter.
- Free or reduced admission to participating nature centers and/or their programs across the country.
- E-mail alerts about events and programs (upon request).
- An invitation to a PVAS Members annual gathering.
- Discounts to participating **local businesses**.

Details available at potomacaudubon.org/member

To become a local member, send in the form below and enclose a check for \$20 (\$15 for seniors and students). Make the check out to "PVAS." This fee covers membership for everyone in your household for one year. For details, go to: <http://potomacaudubon.org/member>.

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip code: _____

Phone (optional): _____

E-mail: _____

To save postage costs, PVAS regularly sends its newsletter by e-mail. You can be assured that we do not share email addresses with anyone. If you would prefer to receive the newsletter by U.S. mail check here: ___

Clip and mail this form to:

Membership Chair, PVAS

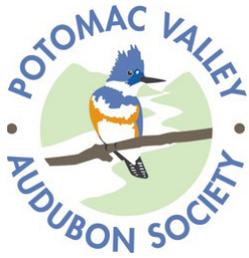
PO Box 578

Shepherdstown, WV 25443



If you'd rather join the National Audubon Society:

Some people prefer National Audubon Society membership, which includes a subscription to the Society's Audubon magazine. To become a National member, go to the Society's website at www.audubon.org and click on "join." If you join National Audubon and reside in Berkeley, Jefferson or Morgan counties in West Virginia, or in Washington County Maryland, you will automatically become a member of PVAS and have access to our events, an e-mail copy of newsletter and e-mail alerts. However almost all of your dues payments will go to the National Audubon Society; only a small percentage will go to PVAS.



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The Potomac Valley Audubon Society meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, September through April. Programs are free and open to the public. For additional information about PVAS or its programs and activities, please contact any of the board members listed here or see <http://www.potomacaudubon.org>. PVAS serves the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and neighboring Washington County, Maryland.

PVAS BOARD

PVAS Board meet-
 ings take place the
 first Thursday of
 the month (Sep-
 tember through
 June). Meetings
 are open to all
 PVAS members.
 Please contact
 the President or
 Vice President if
 you would like to
 attend.

PVAS Officers and Board Members (Year of term expiration in parentheses)

- President: Jane Vanderhook (2016)..... janehook@frontiernet.net
- Vice President: Michael Sullivan (2016) msullivan@limno.com
- Secretary: Diana Gaviria (2016) jpikester@comcast.net
- Treasurer: Dan Cogswell (2017) daniel.cogswell@gmail.com
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 - Elizabeth Morningstar (2017) dl1n1thed1rt@comcast.net

Ex Officio Board Member: Diana Mullis (past president) DianaMullis@aol.com

Emerita Board Member: Jean Neely jeaneely@comcast.net

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